

Crowe

AN

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

DELIVERED IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE,

ON THE

EVENING OF OCTOBER 3, 1870.

BY JOHN E. CROWE, M. D.

PROFESSOR OF OBSTETRICS AND MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE.



LOUISVILLE:

PRINTED BY JOHN P. MORTON AND COMPANY, 156 W. MAIN STREET.

1870.

AN

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

DELIVERED IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE,

ON THE

EVENING OF OCTOBER 3, 1870.

✓
By JOHN E. CROWE, M. D.

PROFESSOR OF OBSTETRICS AND MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE.

LOUISVILLE:

PRINTED BY JOHN P. MORTON AND COMPANY, 156 W. MAIN STREET.

1870.

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE
28559

CORRESPONDENCE.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE, {
October 10, 1870. }

PROF. JOHN E. CROWE, M. D. :

Dear Sir—At a meeting of the Medical Class of the University, the undersigned were appointed a committee to solicit a copy of your introductory address, delivered on the evening of October 3d. It is the wish of the class to preserve the lecture as an honor to its author and the University, and as a fitting memoir of the greatest self-made man and physician of the age.

Hoping you will consent to its publication, we remain,

Very respectfully,

H. P. DAVIS, Ala.,	CAM. ROBINSON, Ind.,
E. D. PEETE, Tenn.,	E. M. TAYLOR, Ill.,
A. A. THOMPSON, Tex.,	W. B. DOHERTY, O.,
A. A. CLEWELL, N. C.,	B. F. BAKER, La.,
M. RHORER, Ky.,	W. G. HOLLAND, Ark.,
H. J. MCLEOD, Ga.,	T. P. RICHMOND, Wis.,
D. PALMER, Penn.,	R. D. DARISSON, W. Va.
W. L. CATHEY, Miss.,	S. P. CARPENTER, Mo.,
W. W. TAYLOR, Ky., <i>Chairman.</i>	

LOUISVILLE, Ky., October 18, 1870.

W. W. TAYLOR, *Chairman*, and others :

Gentlemen—Your kind letter, asking the manuscript of the "Introductory Lecture" I had the honor to deliver before the Class of the Medical Department of the University of Louisville, is received. Custom, no less than your too partial reference to the address, prompts me to place it at your disposal.

With kindest wishes, I remain, etc.

JOHN E. CROWE.

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

DELIVERED BY

JOHN E. CROWE, M. D.

GENTLEMEN OF THE MEDICAL CLASS:

In the name of the Honorable Board of Trustees and the Faculty, I welcome you to the inaugural ceremonies of this the Thirty-fourth Annual Session of the Medical Department of the University of Louisville. During these thirty-four years the good people of Louisville have never failed to attest by their presence the deep interest they feel in the success of this institution, the offspring of their noble liberality, and to assure you that, though far from home and its endearing influences, warm-hearted friends kindly greet you.

This feeling on their part is traditional; for, in the early history of this city, the leading citizens inaugurated a system of public education which, carefully revised and improved upon each year, has been developed into one of the most complete and thorough courses of instruction in the Union. The tangible proof of this assertion exists in the handsome and commodious ward-school buildings and the male and female high-schools, where the youth of our city enjoy unsurpassed advantages for the acquisition of knowledge.

When Transylvania University, which had won for the fair city of Lexington the proud appellation of "the Athens of the West," began its downward career, because of its inability to furnish the necessary clinical and anatomical material to compete successfully with its more eligibly situated northern

rivals, the combined efforts of the Faculty, men of acknowledged ability and learning, stimulated by the love they bore the school to whose fame and renown they had so largely contributed, could not stay the edict of inevitable dissolution. Its race of usefulness was run; its scepter was passing away; its power and glory fading. Three of the distinguished gentlemen composing the Faculty—viz., Caldwell, Cook, and Yandell, sr.—had the foresight and wisdom to realize this truth, and at once resolved to transfer their labors to Louisville, believing that the geographical position of the city, the facilities it afforded for medical instruction in its large hospital wards, and the cordial coöperation of its prominent citizens, augured a success which the inland location of Lexington forbade.

A people so proud of their school system, deeply impressed with the growing commercial importance of their city, saw when these gentlemen acquainted them with their intentions an opportunity of realizing more than their fondest hopes had dreamed of; viz., the culmination of their school system in a university where the youth of the country would be attracted, and Louisville henceforth become a great central seat of academic and medical learning.

Animated by such sentiments, and desirous of conferring such proud distinction upon the city, this square of ground was donated, an imposing edifice erected, a splendid library filled with rare and costly volumes, a museum furnished with cabinets of morbid and anatomical specimens, and a laboratory equipped with a complete chemical apparatus.

And ever since, with but few interruptions, its course has been onward and upward, save when the elements warred against the grand old building which was dear to thousands who had drunk from the fountains of learning beneath its protecting roof; where Flint, the accomplished surgeon; Drake, the philosopher; Caldwell, a Cicero in scholarship and oratory; Cobb, the graceful anatomist; Bartlett, the polished gentleman and erudite physician; Gross, the bold and dashing surgeon, whose eye flashed fire at the gleam of the catling; Silliman, the great master of the laboratory,

and others equally famous, dispensed the great truths of science. And again when grim-visaged war spread desolation and mourning throughout the country.

Hitherto all was peace and prosperity; the white sails of commerce dotted our rivers and seaports; railroads were stretching their iron arms in all directions to receive the products of a bountiful soil. 'Twas truly a land flowing with milk and honey. But the arch-fiend of sectionalism stalked through the country, sowing discord and dissension; the sturdy northerner rushed to arms to defend the Union; the ardent southerner to protect the land of the magnolia and mocking-bird; peaceful pursuits were abandoned; the plowshare was turned into the sword; the busy hum of industry gave place to the loud roar of artillery. Anon the angel of peace swept over the land, and the sword was returned to its scabbard, the olive-branch was proffered, and a fratricidal war closed. With the return of peace the pomp and circumstance of war disappeared; men began to busy themselves about peaceful pursuits; the sacred pulpit preached "glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, to men good will;" the courts of justice adjudicated in a spirit of equity claims between men of opposite politics; the merchant bent his energies to the revival of a drooping commerce; the physician who had followed his neighbors through the din of battle, and fought the diseases of camp-life, wearied with the use of bandages, splints, ambulances, and hospitals, longed for the quietude of civil practice. Men of all ranks, men whose dazzling epaulets and waving plumes won the admiration or excited the envy of thousands, as well as the humble private, casting aside the habiliments of war, were glad to take up the pruning-hook of agriculture, or the marking-brush of commerce, and enjoy the fruits of honest industry beneath their own vine and fig-tree.

Of these vast armies not a few, reënforced yearly by large accessions from the other walks of life, allured by the great good accomplished in the quiet rounds of the surgeon—who, though never heralded in the glories of victory, was, while pæans of praise were sounding in the ears of victors, like the

good Samaritan, pouring the oil of consolation upon the wounds of friend and foe, and sustaining their flagging spirits with the wine of comfort—demanded admission into the noble profession whose votaries sought rather the alleviation of human suffering than coveted the civic or martial honors. And you, gentlemen, have caught that same spirit, and are here to renounce the honors so dear to the statesman, whose policy shapes the destiny of nations; the laurels so cherished by the warrior, whose sword repels the invader and imposes tribute upon even imperial neighbors; the position which the princely merchant so appreciates with his untold millions, the fruit of his energy, tact, and industry; all these distinctions, objects of laudable ambition, you are willing to forego—to sacrifice pleasure, comfort, and even the rest so necessary to recuperate the frame worn by fatigue in its ministrations upon suffering humanity.

Noble profession! How pure and unselfish its objects, its aims; the servant of the ministry, the handmaid of religion. He who would become a true physician, in the elevated and comprehensive signification of the term, must surely attain to the great dignity of a Christian hero, for the path that leads to this high goal is through self-denial and an unreserved devotion to the care of the sick. Ghouls, harpies, and vampires may usurp the place of the regular physician, even as the false prophet “steals the livery of heaven to serve the devil in;” but they feast upon the credulity of the ignorant only. You never find them in the haunts of poverty, speaking words of comfort and administering to the bodily wants of those stricken with disease. The noble benevolence of our profession, knowing no nation, no creed, no condition of life, founded on the broad basis of Christian philanthropy, unfurls its banner upon which is inscribed its time-honored motto: “*Sanos sospitare, agrosque sanare*,” and marches to the fulfillment of its mission of love and mercy.

During the last few years many of the great leaders who have governed and directed the movements of this devoted army have been called to their final reward—Trousseau, Velpeau, Brodie, Syme, Mott, Warren, and Sir JAMES YOUNG

SIMPSON. Of the latter I wish more particularly to speak this evening, to present him as a model and an exemplar, whose social and professional virtues are worthy your most earnest emulation.

Born at Bathgate in 1811, of parents poor in the goods of this world, but rich in the possession of a son whose virtues and talents were destined to confer immortality upon their name, his first struggle with adversity was in endeavoring to obtain an education sufficiently liberal to fit him for one of the learned professions. The Scottish university system rendering an education accessible to the trades-people, the young student was enabled, through the aid of his brother, to enter the University of Edinburgh and become a member of the humanity class under Professor Pillans. "This venerable man," we are told by the *Medical Times and Gazette*, "always believed that his counsel and encouragement had greatly influenced Simpson's subsequent career, and he used to relate with great unction how, impressed with the versatility of his pupil's acquirements, he had urged him to compete for a 'Stewart Bursary,' a scholarship which carried money with it, and being tenable for three years helped the holder to continue his studies in the University. To succeed required an extended study of the classics, which might well have deterred an aspirant from a country school, but Simpson carried off the 'Bursary' and became a student of medicine."

In the year 1832 the degree of Doctor of Medicine was conferred upon him, and he became an assistant to Professor Thompson in the chair of Pathology. This position gave him the opportunity of becoming deeply versed in every phase of disease.

It is related of him that, occasionally lecturing in the place of his master, he gave indication of great originality, and of a desire to advance beyond the teachings on a subject yet in its infancy, and that the old Professor was startled out of all propriety by the new doctrines he heard had been taught in his own class-room.

A vacancy occurring in the post of medical officer at Inverkip, Simpson made application for the position, but was

unsuccessful; a result that brought bitter disappointment to the young aspirant at the time, but which, fortunately for medical science, had an influence in determining his stay in Edinburgh, the theater of his future triumphs. He remained there lecturing in a medical school until the year 1840, when the death of Professor Hamilton created a vacancy in the chair of Obstetrics in the University of Edinburgh. Simpson and Dr. Evory Kennedy, a man of great reputation and merit, were the contending candidates, and so closely contested was the election that Simpson received seventeen votes and Kennedy sixteen. The opposition indulged in the most dismal and gloomy prophecies concerning the future of the University on account of his victory over his more famous rival. But no sooner was Simpson firmly seated in his chair than his genius dispelled their dark forebodings as the sun dissipates the morning mist.

As a lecturer he was impressive and instructive; powerful in argument, and abounding in aptness of illustration. So attractive were his lectures that the custom that prevailed in Edinburgh of calling the roll was dispensed with—every student was sure to be in his seat, drawn thither solely by the magic of his wonderful ability. Old practitioners, grown gray in the service, delighted to hear this great man elucidate the great truths of science.

Probably no man ever had so extensive and varied a practice, and certainly none ever devoted himself with such untiring devotion to the discharge of its responsibilities. The lecture-room, the hospital, the bedside occupied his whole attention. Patients flocked from all parts of the United Kingdom, from the Continent, to his rooms to receive the benefit of his skill, sometimes waiting days for the longed-for interview.

The amount of physical and mental labor performed by this great man is almost beyond credence, and could be endured by one of his wonderful frame only. Even when upon the couch of sickness his ever-active mind was engaged in solving some problem or inventing some surgical instrument for the relief of human suffering. Every moment of his

valuable time was profitably employed. While seeking admission to his patients, or waiting in the ante-room, he was making experiments or writing essays abounding in bold and original views. He did not confine himself to medical topics, but wandered through the whole domain of science, culling choice information from the fields of politics and theology. He took great pride in becoming familiar with the minutiae of the various pursuits of life; and, possessed as he was with a most extraordinary memory, he was able to entertain those with whom he came in contact upon the very subjects of their every-day avocations. 'Tis said that, in conversing with his friends, he could indicate not only the book or pamphlet in which the subject under discussion was treated, but likewise name the very page on which the article was to be found. Endowed by nature with rare powers of mind and great versatility of talent, he brought those faculties under complete subjection by an iron will that enforced the most rigid discipline.

Sir James had, on a certain occasion, promised a paper upon a favorite medical theme to his publisher, and being unexpectedly called upon to redeem his promise, he, being occupied with his professional duties till half past ten o'clock p. m., immediately sat down and wrote till morning, when he hastily prepared himself for his daily duties, wrote during the following night, and did not allow himself any repose until after the completion of his paper on the third night. Truly, as remarked by a friend, it is no wonder he died after thirty years of such incessant labor, but rather that he lived so long a time.

Yet Sir James, who had become so famous by his writings, and whose skill had drawn so many to his consulting-rooms, delighted more in the tribute paid him by the crowds of patients than in the remuneration which was to follow. His great heart welled with sympathy for the suffering, and it afforded him more gratification to give health and happiness to the afflicted than did the tide of wealth that poured into his treasury. He was particularly courteous to the numerous medical men who visited him from all countries to consult

him upon different topics, and to learn from his own lips the teachings which had rendered him so celebrated.

A well-known writer says of him: "His breakfasts and luncheons were among the most curious studies of society. Assembled unceremoniously in a moderate-sized room, with little in common save a wish to see their host, you found a company drawn together from every latitude and longitude, social and geographical. Of all this motley party there is probably hardly one who is not able, and the grades and classes of eminence run through the whole gamut of social distinctions, from duchesses, poets, and earls down to the author of the last successful book on cookery, the inventor of the oddest new patent, a Greek courtier, a Russian gentleman, a German count. At your elbow the last survivor of some terrible shipwreck is telling his story to the wife of that northern ambassador who is meeting, with the softest Scandinavian dialects, the strong maritime Danish of the clever state secretary opposite. Behind you a knot of American physicians, just arrived, are discussing in a loud voice a speech in Congress, or arguing, *sotto voce*, on the particular professional topic upon which they have come to consult the great authority. Turn for a moment from this sculptor, who is waiting to ask the opinion of the many-sided professor on the sketches he is now showing to that portrait painter, and to learn which of them shall be done in marble for the nobleman whose attention the doctor has found time to direct to the rising young artist, and you may catch something of that violent discussion between those arrivals from Australia, who have come from the land of gold in search of what gold can not buy."

And this pen-portrait of the poet is only one of the many pictures that make up the great panorama of his useful life. Prescribing for numerous patients, performing capital operations, attending to a large correspondence and numerous consultations—all these made heavy drafts upon his time and strength; yet he performed these duties faithfully, and so economized his time as to prepare a vast number of essays upon "Hospitalism;" "The stamping out of Small-

pox by Isolation;" "Homeopathy, its Tenets and Tendencies;" "Acupressure;" innumerable articles for the various medical journals; and two large volumes of memoirs. He also devoted himself to antiquarian researches, and became one of the most noted antiquarians in Scotland. An address delivered by him before the "Antiquarian Society of Scotland" was "so rich in erudition and antiquarian lore as to excite the admiration of all."

As a writer Sir James was bold, original, and terse. The commonest topic touched by his pen was immediately invested with an interest altogether unsuspected, and when his gigantic intellect grappled a subject whose importance evoked its whole power, there was a lucidity of expression, an ingeniousness of reasoning, an appositeness of illustration, and an earnest fervor that excited admiration, if it did not convince the understanding. While Sir James highly enjoyed the pleasures of social intercourse, and his bearing in the sick-room was characterized by a mildness and an amiability of manner that at once won the love and confidence of his patients, yet he was not averse to enter the controversial field, and his great fund of knowledge, combined with rare logical ingenuity, rendered him a most formidable foe to encounter.

Like Jenner and Harvey, the greatest boon to suffering humanity his genius elaborated, the discovery of chloroform, involved him in numerous controversies with Robert Lee, of London; Collins, of Dublin; Bigelow, of Boston; and Meigs, of Philadelphia. A storm of violent opposition to the administration of this valuable agent greeted Sir James upon its promulgation. He, aware of Horace Wells's conception of anæsthesia and its practical adaptation, of the full credit of which he was robbed, and of the later discovery of the anæsthetic properties of ether by Morton and Jackson, though Simpson was the first to use it in his own department of practice, applied himself to further experimentation, which led to the grand and glorious discovery of the great properties of chloroform, for which thousands of his own time, and unborn millions will hold his name in grateful remembrance.

Some of the clergy denounced it as a sacreligious inter-

ference with the decrees of Divine Providence; a portion of the profession inveighed against its dangerous properties: others stood mute with awe at the acquisition of so potent an agent. These fierce attacks and unjust clamors aroused all the energy of his character and force of his mind, and he entered the arena armed with a practical experimental knowledge in advocacy of the perfect propriety of its administration, and its entire safety by the observance of ordinary prudence. The same ridicule, jeers, and bitter opposition that Jenner encountered in his immortal discovery of the protective power of vaccination were marshaled in battle array against Simpson. But Simpson had first used it upon himself, and subsequently administered it in practice in the presence of a number of medical men. Instances of its safe and successful employment were daily accumulating. The prior discovery of the properties of ether in America, its use in Boston and in Edinburgh, aided greatly in overcoming the prejudice and opposition to this more powerful and reliable ally in the assuagement of disease.

It is a remarkable and lamentable fact that, though nearly a quarter of a century has elapsed since the discovery of this great boon, which throws the victim of the surgeon's knife into the "sweet obliviousness" of pain, and robs maternity of its pangs, this noble benefactor of his race, who made this discovery, in receiving from the great city of his adoption—the field of his labors, of his contests, and of his triumphs—civic honors in recognition of his eminent professional worth, and in acknowledgment of his vast services to mankind, should be made the subject of an unkind attack because forsooth, in reply to the speech of the Lord Provost, in which a complimentary allusion was made to the discoverer of chloroform, he deemed it unnecessary to go into a detailed account of the whole history of anaesthesia, and give to America the credit of the discovery of ether—an omission of no consequence, since the fact is historical. This attack drew forth two letters which, though indited from his dying couch, are masterpieces of composition, giving a *résumé* of the whole subject of anaesthesia, freely according to our countrymen

their full share of praise, calling attention to the fact that a year intervened between the dates of the discovery of the two agents, and manfully vindicating himself from the imputation of self-glorification.

To quote the language of Dr. Storer: "Looking into the grave that was open at his feet, for he felt that his sickness was to be mortal, he wrote to us these solemn words: 'There never was a more unjust or unjustifiable attack than Dr. Bigelow's. I know, from the inmost depths of my own conscience, that I never said or wrote a single word to detract from the mightiness of the discovery of anæsthesia by sulphuric ether at Boston in 1846. But surely the discovery of another anæsthetic by me a year afterward, more powerful, practical, and useful than sulphuric ether, was in itself a fact of no small moment.' During his last illness he wrote letters to all those with whom he had controversies, manifesting a deep desire to make peace with all the world. What a becoming close to so useful a life! That master mind which had won its way from the humblest walks of life to a chair in one of the most noted universities in the world, and by its own inherent strength, unaided by wealth, family connection, or the influence of powerful friends, commanded the respect and admiration of the medical world, exhibiting not only the simplicity of a child, but that higher and greater, because more difficult to attain, virtue—humility."

What a soft and mellow light it casts over his whole life! How it tones down to an earnest desire to establish doctrines that he was thoroughly convinced were true, what might otherwise be ascribed to the asperity of a nature that delighted in controversy!

Sir James was a fervent believer in Christianity, and always, notwithstanding his extensive practice, found time to attend church regularly and punctually. Six days were enough with him to give to the cares and anxieties of this life; his Divine Master claimed the seventh, and he gave it freely and cheerfully. No matter what other duties devolved upon him, he recognized the paramount claims of the Giver of every good and perfect gift; and surely no man ever endeavored

more assiduously than did he to cultivate those gifts for the benefit of mankind.

Industry, it has been said, is not natural to man; honor, gain, and necessity are its prompters. In the instance of Dr. Simpson it was a duty and a joy.

But he is gone! All that is mortal of Sir James Simpson has been consigned to the grave by a world of friends; that which is immortal has flown to its Maker, and to the enjoyment of a never-ending bliss. And yet, while that lifeless form returns to its original clay, the fruit of his labors, investigations, and discoveries will be applied to the assuagement of human woe, the alleviation of human suffering, till time is no more.

